

THE PROCESS OF VOTING ABSENTEE ★ ★ ★

Any registered voter may vote by absentee ballot. Rather than go to the polls to cast a ballot on Election Day, you may apply for an absentee ballot, which you will need to complete and return to your elections official.

To apply for an absentee ballot, you may use the application printed on your Sample Ballot, which you will receive prior to every election, or apply in writing to your county elections official. You will need to submit a completed application or letter to your county elections official between 29 days and 7 days before the election. The application or letter must contain:

1. your name and residence address as stated on your registration card;
2. the address to which the absentee ballot should be sent (if different than your registered address);
3. the name and date of the election in which you would like to vote absentee; and
4. the date and your signature.

Once your application is processed by your county elections official, the proper ballot type/style will be sent to you. After you have voted, insert your ballot in the envelope provided for this purpose, making sure you complete all required information on the envelope. You may return your voted absentee ballot by:

1. mailing it to your county elections official;
2. returning it in person to a polling place or elections office within your county on Election Day; or
3. authorizing a legally allowable third party (relative or person residing in the same household as you) to return the ballot on your behalf.

Regardless of how the ballot is returned, it MUST be received by the time polls close (8 p.m.) on Election Day. Late-arriving absentee ballots are not counted.

Once your voted absentee ballot is received by your county elections official, your signature on the absentee ballot return envelope will be compared to the signature on your voter registration card to determine that you are the authorized voter. To preserve the secrecy of your ballot, the ballot will then be separated from the envelope and the ballot becomes as anonymous and secret as any other ballot.

Apply to Be a Permanent Vote-By-Mail Voter:

Any voter may apply for PERMANENT ABSENT VOTER STATUS (Elections Code § 3201). These voters are automatically sent a vote-by-mail ballot for every election without having to fill out an application every time. Please contact your county elections official to apply to become a permanent vote-by-mail voter if you wish to receive vote-by-mail ballots for all future elections. To find out who your county elections official is, go online at www.ss.ca.gov/elections/elections_d.htm to see a list of contact information for all county elections officials.